GSM services to J & K and North-Eastern Region

171. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that GSM Services are currently being denied to Jammu and Kashmir and the North-Eastern region on security grounds;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have considered communication infrastructure as part of the developmental dimensions which is an important element of the security response; and

(d) if so, whether the current position *vis-a-vis* Jammu and Kashmir and North-Eastern Region regarding GSM would be revised ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN) : (a) and (b) The Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS) is operational, at present, in Guwahati and Shillong. Further expansion of fresh start of these services in these regions is not permitted on security considerations.

(c) and (d) The Government considers communication infrastructure as an important part of developmental dimension/process and in view of the same, the current position *vis-a-vis* J & K and North-East regarding GSM (Global System for Mobile Communication) will be reviewed from time to time.

Row over VSNL-TATA

172. SHRI JIBON ROY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the News-item captioned "BJP backs Mahajan on VSNL-TATA row" published in the Hindustan Times dated the 1st June, 2002; and

(b) if so, what is Government's position over the matter of transfer of wealth from a disinvested P.S.U. to a subsidiary of the company ?